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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000120

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SUBJECT: Presidential Decree Creating Prime Minister,  
Head of Government

REF: CONAKRY 118

1. (U) On January 31, President Lansana Conte signed a decree setting forth, by delegation, the powers, duties, and functions of the Prime Minister, Head of Government (reftel).

2. (U) Begin text of informal embassy translation:

The President of the Republic, considering the Constitution, notably Article 39,

Decrees:

Article 1: By delegation of the President of the Republic, the post of Prime Minister, Head of Government, is hereby created. The Prime Minister is charged with leading, overseeing, coordinating, and energizing Government action.

Article 2: He proposes to the President of the Republic the structure and composition of the Government, whose members are appointed by decree.

Article 3: Members of the Government [i.e., Cabinet Ministers] are accountable to the Prime Minister for the management of their respective departments. They are jointly responsible for decisions at Cabinet meetings.

Any vacancy in the Prime Minister's position automatically terminates the functions of the other Members of the Government.

Article 4: The Prime Minister is fully accountable to the President of the Republic for the functioning of the Government. By delegation, he [the Prime Minister] presides over Cabinet meetings for a given agenda.

Article 5: In agreement with the President of the Republic, he defines the powers, duties, and functions of each Minister. In this connection, he may delegate some of his prerogatives to the Members of the Government.

Article 6: He makes appointments to civilian positions and manages the Administration.

Article 7: He oversees the normal functioning of Government.

Article 8: The Prime Minister is responsible for cleaning up Government finances and reviving the national economy. He ensures that all appropriate mechanisms are applied to check inflation.

Article 9: The Prime Minister is responsible for defining economic

policy and implementing it.

Article 10: The Prime Minister ensures that the commitments between the Government and its social partners [i.e., labor unions and employers' organization] are implemented.

Article 11: The Prime Minister may represent the President of the Republic at all sub-regional, regional, and international meetings.

Article 12: The Prime Minister is responsible for promoting political and social dialogue, and ensures that accords with political parties are implemented and the electoral process is conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

Article 13: The present decree takes effect on the date of its signature, and will be recorded and published in the Official Journal of the Republic.

Conakry, January 31, 2007

General Lansana Conte  
President of the Republic

End text.

13. (U) Under Guinea's constitution, the President of the Republic is both head of state and head of government. Effective immediately, this presidential decree creates, by presidential delegation, the position of prime minister as head of government.

14. (U) A separate decree will be necessary to name the individual to fill this position. The decree is based on the legal constitutional framework which allows the president to delegate some of his authority to a prime minister.

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15. (U) By naming the prime minister also head of government, it invests significant executive powers in the person in this position. None of Guinea's previous prime ministers under President Conte were also invested with this title, which, inter alia, should allow the future prime minister to chair full cabinet meetings (Conseil des Ministres).

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COMMENT  
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16. (SBU) President Conte can always rescind whatever executive powers he has delegated to his future prime minister. The future prime minister has no inherent powers; the position is not even mentioned in the constitution. Given Conte's track record with previous prime ministers, we and most observers remain skeptical that he will really refrain from involving himself, for better or worse, in government affairs.

17. (SBU) The issuance of this decree appears to have only slightly assuaged public opinion, large segments of which remain doubtful that Conte will ever relinquish real power. Most Guineans are now focusing on the identity of the future prime minister. They want someone new, not some old political hack, to assume the role of prime minister in order to break with the past and move Guinea forward.

McDONALD